

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SCCT-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01 /083 W

----- 112162

R 301732Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4159

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 5611

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: LEBANESE-FEDAYEEN RELATIONS

REF: BEIRUT 5387

SUMMARY: AMID LARGELY INEFFECTIVE ATTEMPTS BY GOL
LEADERS TO FIND SOLUTION THAT WOULD RESTORE GREATER
HARMONY TO LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS, SHIITE
IMAM MUSA SADR HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN GAL-
VANIZING PRIVATE EFFORTS TO THAT SAME END. HIS EF-
FORTS, IN OUR VIEW, ARE TIMELY, CONSTRUCTIVE AND
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POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN

WHETHER THEY WILL PRODUCE MEANINGFUL RESULTS. END SUMMARY.

1. CONTINUING "CONSULTATION" CONDUCTED SINCE APR 16 CEASEFIRE BY GOL OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY PRIMIN SOLH AND PRES FRANGIE, WITH FEDAYEEN AND PHALANGIST LEADERS AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS OTHER LEBANESE POLITICAL GROUPING HAVE STILL PRODUCED NO AGREEMENT ON CONCRETE OR PRACTICAL MEASURES TO RESOLVE ISSUES UNDERLYING APR 13-17 CLASHES IN LEBANON. THESE ISSUES--WHICH AS NOTED REFTEL STEM FROM FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS GENERATED BY UNFETTERED FEDAYEEN PRESENCE AND ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON--REMAIN VERY MUCH ALIVE, ALTHOUGH ALL PARTIES SEEM ANXIOUS FOR THE MOMENT TO PROCLAIM THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS MAINTENANCE OF CEASEFIRE, PRESERVATION OF CIVIL ORDER, RESPECT FOR LEBANON'S SOVEREIGNTY AND SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN "REVOLUTION."

2. PRIMIN SOLH IN HIS ANXIETY TO PROJECT IMAGE OF PROGRESSIVE RETURN TO NORMALITY AS RESULT OF HIS OWN AND GOL'S EFFORTS TO EXERT SOME SEMBLANCE OF CONTROL, HAS BEEN DRAWING ON THESE ROSY PROFESSIONS TO REASSURE PUBLIC OPINION THAT "HARMONY," BROTHERHOOD" AND REASON WILL HENCEFORTH PREVAIL. SOLH'S REASSURANCE ARE BEING GREETED WITH GENERAL SCEPTICISM, HOWEVER, AND ALL INDICATION ARE THAT HIS CABINET--WHICH CONTINUES TO BE REVEN BY PHALANGIST-LEFTIST FEUDING--IS DESTINED FOR DISSOLUTION BY RES FRANGIE AS SOON AS HE CAN ARRANGE TRANSITION TO ANOTHER GOVT HEADED BY AN "ACCEPTABLE" SUNNI SUCCESSOR TO SOLH--PROBABLY NOT UNTIL AFTER SERIES OF UPCOMING HOLIDAYS WHICH TERMINATE MAY 6. (LOCAL SPECULATION PLACES FORMER PRIMIN TAKIEDDINE SOLH AND AKKAR STRONGMAN SULEIM N AL 'ALI IN FRONT-RUNNING, BUT WE UNDERSTAND ABDULLAH YAFI, NASSIB BARBIR AND EVEN RASHID KARAME MAY ALSO BE UNDER CONSIDERATION. MENTION IS ALSO FREQUENTLY HEARD CONFIDENTIAL

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OF A "STRONG" NON-POLITICIAN--WHO THIS COULD BE NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW.)

3. ONLY REAL EFFORTS THUS FAR WHICH SHOWS PROMISE OF INJECTING NEW ELEMENTS OF MUCH-NEEDED STABILITY INTO LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AND HELPING GOL AND CONTENDING PARTIES TO BREAK OUT OF TREND TOWARD INCREASING VIOLENCE WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED

THOSE RELATIONS OF LATE IS BEING MADE BY SHIITE
IMAM MUSA SADR. IN MIDST OF ESSENTIALLY INEFFECTIVE
CONSULTATION AND OTHER "TO-ING AND FRO-ING"
NOTED ABOVE, SADR ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE CONVOKED
APR 19 "CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION"
COMPRISING 77 NOTABLES FROM VIRTUALLY ALL SEGMENTS
OF LEBANESE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS AND
PROFESSIONAL LIFE TO DISCUSS CURRENT UNSETTLED SITUATION
AND HOW IT MIGHT BE CIRCUMSCRIBED. FROM THIS CONFERENCE
WAS FORMED, UNDER IMAM SADR'S LEADERSHIP, A 14-MEMBER
"NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC PACIFICATION" WHICH HAS
UNDERTAKEN PREPARATION OF A NEW "NATIONAL CHARTER" REPORTEDLY
AIMED AT (A) RESTORING PUBLIC ORDER, CONFIDENCE AND
TRANQUILITY, (B) ESTABLISHING A NEW "ACCORD" TO GOVERN
FUTURE LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS, AND (C) WORKING
OUT EFFECTIVE PROGRAM FOR ACHIEVING BROAD "SOCIAL" REFORM
TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR LEBANON'S UNDER-PRIVILEGED
INHABITANTS. (LATTER OBJECTIVE HAS LONG BEEN IMAM SADR'S
MAIN PREOCCUPATION, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS BELIEF THAT
LEBANON'S ACUTE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE MUCH TO BLAME
AS THIS COUNTRY'S PALESTINIAN PROBLEM FOR CAUSING RECENT
TURMOIL AND CONTINUING TENSIONS, HE HAS SEIZED OPPORTUNITY
TO LUMP THEM TOGETHER IN HIS "NATIONAL CHARTER" EFFORTS.)

4. "COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC PACIFICATION" HAS HELD BROAD
SERIES OF CONSULTATIONS OVER PAST WEEK WITH VARIOUS
POLITICIANS, INFLUENTIAL LEADERS AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 5611

MOLDERS OF PUBLIC OPINION, AND ITS ACTIVITY HAS HELPED DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM AND TAKE SOME STEAM OUT OF ONGOING LEFTIST EFFORTS TO ISOLATE PHALANGE FROM MAINSTREAM OF LEBANESE BODY POLITIC. PRES FRANGIE APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN HIS BLESSING TO THE COMMITTEE'S WORK, YASIR 'ARAFAT IS REPORTED TO HAVE ASSURED IMAM SADR OF HIS SUPPORT FOR IT BEFORE LEAVING LAST WEEK FOR DAMASCUS AND MOSCOW, AND REACTION OF OTHER LOCAL LUMINARIES--INCLUDING PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL--AS WELL AS GENERAL PUBLIC HAS BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT COMMITTEE'S DRAFTING OF "PRINCIPLES" TO CONFIDENTIAL

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BE EMBODIED IN NEW "CHARTER" IS NEARING COMPLETION AND THAT FOLLOWING ITS PRESENTATION TO 77-MEMBER "RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE" IT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO PRES FRANGIE (AND PRESUMABLY TO PLO LEADERSHIP) FOR THEIR FINAL APPROVAL AND (IMAM SADR WOULD HOPE) IMPLEMENTATION.

5. COMMENT: (A) WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, WILL FOLLOW PRESENTATION OF NEW "NATIONAL CHARTER" TO PARTIES KGOL, PHALANGE, FEDAYEEN, ETC.) DIRECTLY CONCERNED IS ANYBODY'S GUES AT THIS JUNCTURE. WE GATHER ITS "PRINCIPLES" FOR NEW LEBANESE-FEDAYEEN MODUS VIVENDI ARE NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO REPLACE THOSE ENSHRINED IN 1969 CAIRO AGREEMENT (EVEN THOUGH LATTER HAS LONG SINCE BECOME LARGELY IRRELEVANT TO CURRENT STATE OF GOL-FEDAYEEN RELATIONS) BUT MAY TAKE FORM OF PROTOCOL OR SOME OTHER "ADD-ON- TOTO IT. EVEN IF GOL AND BULK OF LEBANESE PUBLIC IPINION

SHOULD ENDORSE SUCH NEW "PRINCIPLES," IT WOULD REMAIN TO BE SEEN WHETHER THEY WOULD EVER BE EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED. (FEDAYEEN, REGARDLESS OF PLO LEADERSHIP'S PROTESTATIONS OF GOOD FAITH AND WILLINGNESS TO "COOPERATE" WITH GOL, CAN BE EXPECTED TO RESIST--WITH HELP FROM THEIR LOCAL ALLIES--ANY SIGNIFICANT EROSION OF THEIR CURRENT PRESENCE AND PERQUISITES IN LEBANON.) IN SHORT, THERE IS EVERY POSSIBILITY THAT IMAM SADR'S "CHARTER"--LIKE THE CAIRO AGREEMENT--MAY NEVER PROGRESS BEYOND STAGE OF PIOUS EXPRESSION OF WELL-MEANING BUT VAGUE AND UNREALIZABLE "PRINCIPLES," SOMETHING THAT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO FURTHER TEMPORARY REDUCTION OF CURRENT TENSIONS BUT PROVIDE NO RPT NO REAL SOLUTION TO BASIC CONFLICTS AND INCONSISTENCIES UNDERLYING LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS.

(B) WE ALSO WONDER IF IMAM SADR, BY LUMPING TICKLISH QUESTION OF LEBANESE-FEDAYEEN RELATIONS WITH LEBANON'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN HIS NEW "CHARTER," MIGHT BE BITING OFF MORE THAN HE, GOL AND LEBANESE BODY POLITIC CAN CHEW. THOUGH WE CAN ONLY APPLAUD HIS ENERGY AND MOTIVES, HE MAY BE

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LOADING MORE CONTROVERSIAL SUBSTANCE INTO HIS "CHARTER" THAN LEBANON'S TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS AND VESTED INTERESTS CAN BEAR, THUS JEOPARDIZING HIS OTHER, MORE IMMEDIATE GOAL OF INJECTING GREATER STABILITY INTO THE LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONSHIP.

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